



ALASKA PEOPLE

July/August 1995 — Vol. 16, No. 4

Inside—

- Firefighter safety top priority
- Orphaned moose find temporary home
- Interagency Earthquest wows rural youth

New faces on the job

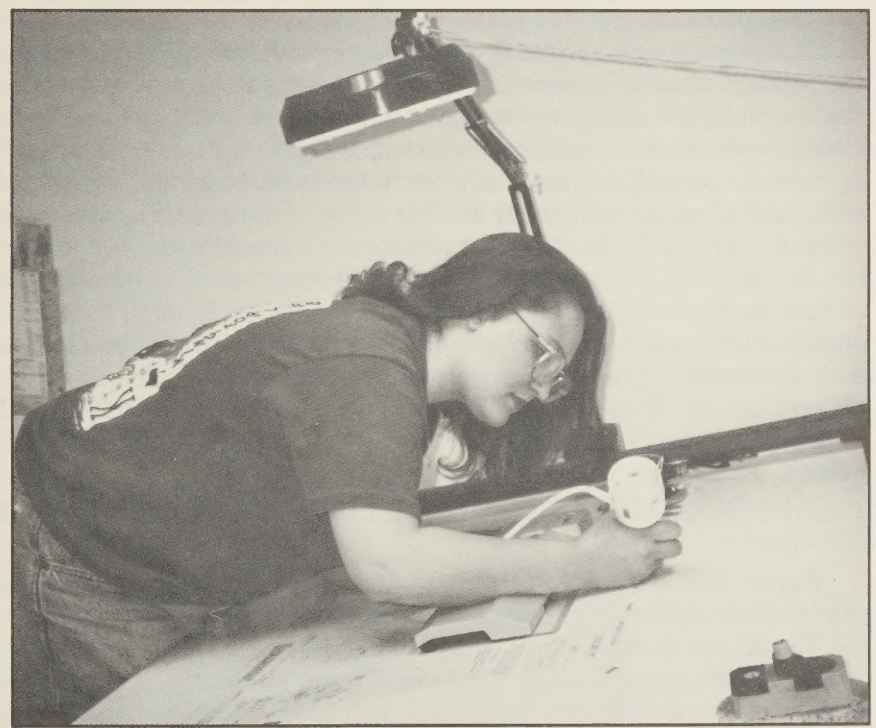
Innovative program opens doors for area teens

Several high school students in Anchorage are getting their first look at surveying and mapping technology and other BLM programs, thanks to the combined efforts of BLM and the Anchorage School District.

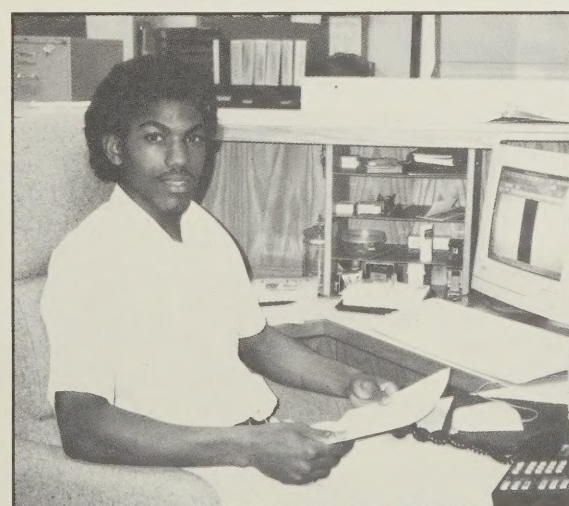
This spring BLM entered into a cooperative agreement with the school district to provide high school juniors and seniors part-time jobs during the school year and full-time jobs during the summer. This agreement, developed and coordinated by Bob Conquergood of Cadastral Survey, gives the students experience and training in a "real world" environment. "The school district recruits and hires the students, and handles the administrative details such as payroll and insurance," explains Conquergood. "In turn, BLM reimburses the school district for the cost of the program."

Eight students are on board learning new skills in Field Surveys, Mapping Sciences, Title and Land Status, the Resources Library, and the Joint Pipeline Office. Two more students are slated to begin later in July.

With some initial teething problems overcome, the agreement is working smoothly. For more information about the program, contact Conquergood at (907) 271-3144.



Virginia Morris, above, makes a correction to a master title plat. Morris will enter UAA as a freshman this fall. Cecil Rodriguez, left, crunches numbers at the Joint Pipeline Office. He will complete his final semester of high school this fall while taking concurrent classes at UAA.



Firefighter safety is first priority

BLM and the nation as a whole never wants to go through another fire season like 1994. The tragic loss of 14 firefighters in Colorado and other fire deaths focused concerns on wildland fire safety.

Important lessons were learned, including an affirmation that agency personnel at all levels, and not just those directly involved in fire suppression, must demonstrate a commitment to safety. As Secretary of Interior Babbitt stated, we are committed to "Zero Tolerance" of carelessness and unsafe actions.

The commitment to and accountability for safety is a joint responsibility of firefighters and managers. All fire suppression plans and actions must reflect this commitment to firefighter safety. No resource or property is worth adding to the inherent risk associated with firefighting.

Individuals must be personally committed to and responsible for their own safety and the safety of those with whom they work. We must have a passion for safety. It's not enough to let others make decisions that affect your own safety. If you challenge decisions that lead to an unsafe situation, you are helping yourself and everyone else. Be assured that management will support you.

Federal wildland fire agencies have undergone an unprecedented self-examination of their wildland fire programs. The investigations and reviews of the accidents identified problems in management and on the fireline that must be corrected. Many of these have been completed, while some will take a little longer to resolve.

The Alaska Fire Service is justifiably proud of its safety record. It has examined it from top to bottom. A refresher training course was instituted this year to drum in the element of safety to new and returning firefighters. Aviation procedures, communications, fuel handling, field communications, storage and other parts of the operations have been reviewed with safety improvements in mind.

We are protecting renewable resources. They will grow back if a fire burns over them. A life is not renewable. Please remember:

- **Safety comes first on every fire, every time.**
- **The ten standard fire orders are firm. We don't break them; we don't bend them.**
- **All firefighters have the right to a safe assignment.**

—Tom Allen, State Director

Refresher course keeps emphasis on safety

A new refresher safety training course was given this year to seasonal firefighters at the Alaska Fire Service.

The course is required for everyone with an operations rating on their red card and is recommended for all other employees, according to Dave Jandt, leader of the hotshot program. Crew bosses, fire suppression specialists, hot-shot crews and safety officers received the training at two all-employee sessions at AFS. Smokejumpers Jon Larson, Chip Houde and John McColgan and Fred Kutzgar of the Fire Specialists Branch assisted in developing the course.

Jandt said the course has segments on basic safety, fire shelters and reviews of past accidents. The class hears about the Standard Fire Orders, the Watch-Out Situations, the effects of fuels, weather and topography on fires, and indications of extreme fire behavior. Then it discusses the LCES of fire safety—Lookouts, Communications, Escape routes and Safety zones.

"We talk about what to look for, what makes a good lookout, when to go into the black, what is a good safety zone," Jandt said.

The class goes outside to erect fire shelters in the next segment, after watching a video in which a shelter is deployed in a 40-mile-an-hour wind. Next they review several fire accidents, including the 1994 South Canyon fire in Colorado, where 14 firefighters were killed. Jandt ends

the course with a discussion of the Pothole Lake fire near Kenai in 1991, where firefighters were forced into the burned area by flames.

—Andy Williams



Smokejumpers land practice jumps at Birch Hill. Seven smokejumpers completed rookie training at AFS this year, taking 12-15 practice jumps. Returning smokejumpers took refresher jumps. The three pictured here were in the rookie "Class of 1990."

Andy Williams

Young moose find temporary home

The call came to the Alaska State Troopers in Glennallen on a rainy Sunday afternoon. Copper Center resident Reed Carlson reported a dead cow moose at the Tangle Lakes Campground—could someone do something about the carcass, and what about the orphaned calves still lingering near their mother?

Brian Stevenson, the area's Alaska State Trooper for Fish and Wildlife Protection, notified BLM Ranger Joe Morris, and the pair drove to the campground to assess the situation. Morris is cross-deputized to enforce state fish and game regulations, so the two often work together.

Upon arriving at the scene, the officers verified that the cow was,

indeed, dead, leaving twin calves no more than a day or two old.

"I called our outdoor rec specialist, Kathy Liska, advised her of the dead moose, and that it was approximately 75 yards from the boat launch," reports Morris. "I recommended it be removed from the campground, since it could attract bears and present a danger to campers."

Liska pulled together several of the Glennallen seasonal employees and volunteers, including Lou Volpe, John Geiger, Jon Colter, and Ian Edwards. The crew quartered out and disposed of the carcass in an area away from human activity.

"She weighed maybe eleven to thirteen hundred pounds," recalls Turner. "It must have made a great feast for some grizzly bear or wolf."

Although the moose had apparently died of natural causes only a short time earlier, the task of disposing of the carcass was not pleasant. Volpe says, "It's not something I want to do again."

Trooper Stevenson's wife, Max, received a limited permit from the State Fish and Game office to take custody of the calves. She and Stevenson are nurturing them for eventual release into the wild.

"I sometimes feel like 'mother

moose,'" laughs Mrs. Stevenson. "It's a learning experience for us all. They were so young, and weak from not eating that first night. I wanted to wrap them in electric blankets, or at least let them sleep inside, but Brian gathered tall dead grass to make a soft, dry place for them to sleep. He teases me about the electric bug zapper I put outside for them, telling me that they 'don't have anyone swatting mosquitoes for them in the wild,' but they had such a tough start in life. I like making them a little more comfortable now, in preparing them for what's ahead."

Although the Stevensons have tremendously enjoyed seeing the calves grow larger and stronger, they take the responsibilities associated with their temporary custody very seriously. They encourage the calves to freely roam the extensive open land behind their secluded home, and limit the calves' exposure to humans and domestic animals.

But the calves are also privy to certain domestic luxuries. "They love Brian's poppies (a gift from former haz mat specialist Mark Phillips and his wife)," says Mrs. Stevenson. "Brian really enjoyed the poppies, but it looks like they'll lose out to the calves."

—KJ Mushovic



BLM Ranger Joe Morris, right, State Trooper Brian Stevenson, and Glennallen resident Reed Carlson discuss what will become of two newly orphaned calves found at the Tangle Lakes Campground.

Students take a “walk on the

“Who knows how to tell a black spruce from a white spruce?” Tony Gasbarro held a forester’s magnifying glass and beckoned the youngsters to use the ones they held. “You fold back the needles and look at the surface of the twig. You see those tiny reddish hairs on the stem? You won’t find those on white spruce.”

The youngsters peered through the glasses, and one by one, exclaimed in excitement as they spied the tell-tale sign.

The kids were participating in Earthquest, a wildlife and wildland exploration camp at Circle Hot Springs June 6-15. The program was organized by a partnership of federal and state agencies and Alaska Native organizations. Twenty youths, 9th, 10th and 11th-graders from rural areas, came to participate with instructors from more than a dozen federal and state agencies and Native groups.

Gasbarro, an extension forester with Alaska Cooperative Extension, University of Alaska Fairbanks, BLM wildlife biologist Randi Jandt, and Jim Roessler, fire fuels management specialist with the Alaska Fire Service, taught a section on fire and forestry.

The students gathered in a boggy, forested area along the road between Circle Hot Springs and Central. An

occasional darkened spar stood up from the cover of birch and willow. Black spruce less than knee-high grew all over.

The instructors showed the youths how to estimate the age of the trees. Using that and other evidence, they determined that a fire had burned the area about 10 years before. Later at another site, using a bore to pull samples from the tree and counting the rings in the core, they aged trees of more than 100 years.

Jandt and Roessler showed how the forest came back after fires. They examined willows and found where moose had browsed the stunted tips of shoulder-high branches. Lower down, where snow level had been, they found where hares had nibbled. The group judged the area good



Wildlife biologist Randi Jandt counts rings to age a young birch tree growing back after a fire. Tony Gasbarro, right, an extension forester with the Cooperative Extension Service, also participated.



Andy Williams

wild side"

habitat for moose, excellent for hare, marten and other wildlife, and good for scenic and recreational values.

Other day-long modules included fish and aquatic ecology, mining and geology, wildlife and public lands management. Back at the hot springs, the youngsters used problem-solving skills taught in an environmental dispute resolution course by Dr. Susan Todd of the School of Agriculture and Land Resources Management, UAF, to prepare a fire management plan for a resource area.

The mining and geology section was held at Coal Creek 40 miles up the Yukon River from Circle in the Yukon-Charley National Preserve. It was marred when Jim Deininger, geologist with the Kobuk District, suffered a serious eye injury when he was hit in the eye by a fragment of rock.

Roger Kaye, who works with the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Dave Schmitz of the Gates of the Arctic National Park, said Earthquest is designed as a multi-year program, and that future youth camps are expected.

In addition to the instructors, BLM sponsored two RAPS students in the program: Annette Donaldson of Delta and James Grant Holmberg of Fairbanks.

Despite the accident to Deininger, BLM participants believed the 10-day program was a valuable experience for the youths, and looked forward to working with Earthquest again.

—Andy Williams

Outdoor classroom a hit!



Andy Williams

Craig McCaa, a geologist with the Steese/White Mountain District, explains the finer points of gold panning to a Fairbanks sixth-grader during Fairbanks Outdoor Days.

Professional resource specialists again played host to sixth-grade students from area schools during Fairbanks Outdoor Days May 16-18.

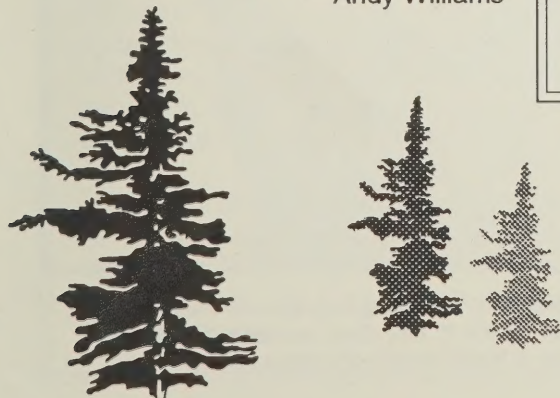
This year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service co-sponsored the event with BLM. About 70 people from more than a dozen federal and state agencies and private businesses taught students about natural resource subjects.

BLM geologist Jim Deininger has coordinated the event since it began five years ago. This year nearly 850 sixth-graders and more than 50 teachers from 13 schools and a group of correspondence students participated with the instructors in the three-day-long outdoor educational experience. Each student spent a day at the event.

Students learned about archeology, fisheries, aquatic ecology, hydrology and groundwater, gold panning, lode and placer minerals exploration, map and compass use, forest ecology and fire ecology, wildfire management, telemetry and wildlife.

"The activities teach children about the outdoors, reinforce science principles learned in the classroom and foster proper care and concern for the natural resources of Alaska," Deininger said.

—Andy Williams



Workwise or Otherwise

BLM IN THE NEWS—June was a busy month as media from around the state visited several BLM sites for upcoming news stories.

- Alaska Magazine interviewed emergency firefighting crews at Ft. Yukon June 14 & 15 for an article on wildland firefighting in Alaska.

- A television production crew for The Discovery Channel's *World of Wonder* series filmed a feature about the Bering Glacier. Newspaper articles about the glacier's movement have recently appeared in the *Portland Oregonian* and the *Des Moines Register*.

- KATN-TV in Fairbanks interviewed AFS employees for a segment commemorating the 1994 fire deaths in Colorado. The *Denver Post* interviewed State Director Tom Allen for an article on the one-year anniversary of the tragic incident that claimed the lives of 14 firefighters. Allen headed up an interagency management review team following the incident.

- Alaska Airlines Magazine visited the Mesa Site in the Brooks Range June 20-23 to interview researchers and photograph the remote camp.

SPRING CLEANING—The Midnight Sun Hotshot Crew made good use of its time between fires in June. The 20-member crew spent nine days fixing up the Marion Creek Campground and other sites along the Dalton Highway.

"They cleared up the down and dead wood at Marion Creek and bucked it up for firewood. There were probably 125-150 cords," said Dave Liebersbach, who managed the project for the Arctic District. "They brushed out around the Coldfoot Visitors Center and re-oiled the log building. They worked on five or six sites along the Dalton from 60-Mile Camp at the Yukon Crossing to 30 miles north of Coldfoot."

The crew usually spend two weeks or more on "project work" for the Alaska Fire Service and BLM, depending on fires, during the summer. They planned to stay 12 days on the Dalton, but had to leave early to a fire by Chalkyitsik.

CONGRATS!—Leslie Simmons, hazardous materials specialist with AFS, was among the first BLM employees to complete a new graduate certificate program at BLM's National Training Center in Phoenix, Ariz. This new cooperative education partnership between BLM and Wayne State University of Michigan was designed specifically for hazardous materials management professionals.

"Universities are just beginning to look at the cross-discipline training needs of the hazardous materials program," explains Simmons. "BLM and other agencies have many people who need continuing education. This is a good program to fill that need."

BEAR PATROL—JPO's Chic Jensen is a pilot, but he doesn't have a plane. So he joined up with someone who does: the Civil Air Patrol.

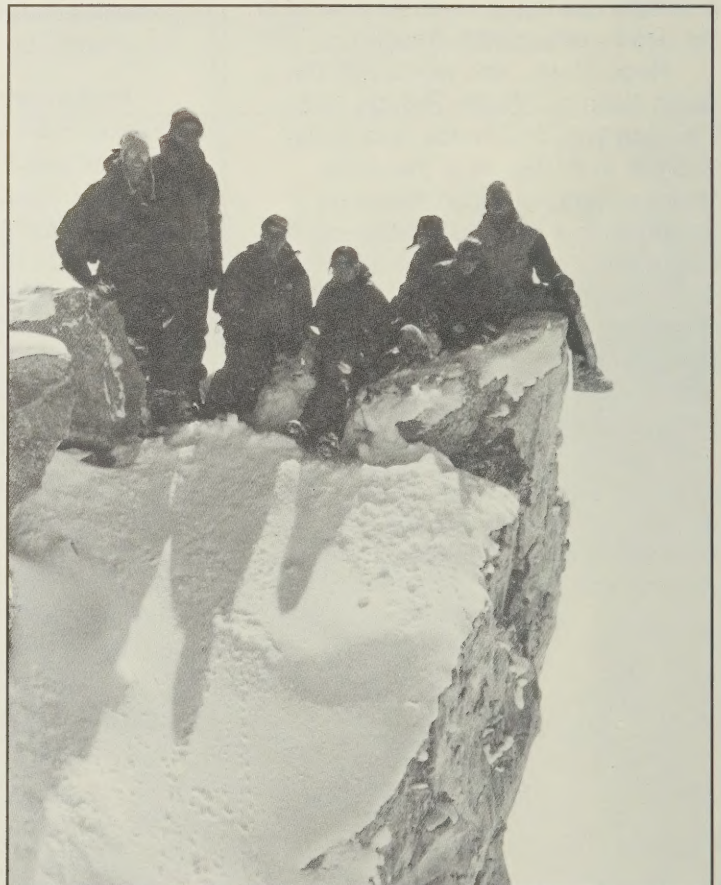
One of CAP's most valuable contributions is to aid in

the search and rescue of downed flyers. Jensen got in on the action in early July when he participated in a rescue northwest of Beluga. A man crashed and rolled his plane in a grassy airstrip and was missing for four days. The search was hampered by low clouds, but eventually they located the man, who was unhurt but marooned in an isolated area.

"It's a good thing we were there," said Jensen. "Several bears were in the area and one kept heading for the pilot. I buzzed it a few times and it finally left him alone. He was eventually rescued by helicopter. It's always nice to have a happy ending. They don't always end like this."

REACHING THE TOP!—A jubilant Jani Oviatt reached the summit of Mt. McKinley June 23. Jani is the wife of Cadastral Survey DSD George Oviatt. She set out with an eight-person expedition June 2, after two years of preparation and training for the climb. "For me it was a personal challenge, to see what I'm capable of doing," she said. George says it's great to have her back home. "Only about a third of the climbers who set out for the McKinley summit actually make it. So I'm very happy and proud for her."

Jani is now working at REI (Recreational Equipment, Inc.) in Anchorage, where she uses her recent experience to advise other climbers about gear and equipment.



Jani Oviatt (third from left) and her group stop to catch their breath on a ledge at 17,000 ft. Two days later the climbers reached the summit of North America's highest peak.



EXPORTS ARE UP!—Deborah Williams of the Secretary's Office shared good news about Alaska export trends at a press conference in Anchorage June 27. The event was held the same day as the White House Pacific Rim Economic Conference in Portland, Ore. Dr. John Kim, left, of UAA talked about results of a new report just released by the Alaska Center for International Business. Lt. Gov. Fran Ulmer also spoke briefly at the conference.

May/June Awards!

Sustained Superior Performance

Joseph Correa, quality assurance/quality control engineer, AK-991
Ray Eleven, safety liaison, AK-991
Steve Grantland, digital electronics mechanic, AK-943
Joe Labay, land law examiner, AK-960
Douglas Lalla, geophysicist, AK-991
Sandy Larson, supervisory staffing specialist, AK-951
James Lusher, engineer, AK-991
Gary Paddock, telecommunications specialist, AK-943
Gary Reimer, operations officer, AK-991
Carol Sheldon, supervisory employee relations specialist, AK-951
Connie Van Horn, land law examiner, AK-960

Quality Step Increase

Tim Godfrey, employee relations specialist, AK-951

On-the-Spot Award

Grant Beebe, lead forestry technician, AK-343
Allen Biller, supervisory forestry technician, AK-393
Paul Borcharding, lead forestry technician, AK-393
Roger Delaney, natural resources specialist, AK-063
Steve Flippen, land law examiner, AK-964
Karl Franke, forestry technician, AK-393
Shirley Goforth, support services supervisor, AK-328
Lynette Roberts, information receptionist, AK-328
Kenita Stenroos, accounting technician, AK-328
Darlene Thomas, mail & file clerk, AK-328

Time-Off Award

Sharon Baker, fire support assistant, AK-350
Eugene Houde, forestry technician, AK-353
Dave Jandt, supervisory forestry technician, AK-352
Jon Larson, lead forestry technician, AK-353
John McColgan, forestry technician, AK-353
John Miller, electronics mechanic, AK-943
Mary Jane O'Daniel, administrative assistant, AK-328
Lynette Roberts, information receptionist, AK-328
Troy Schmitt, cartographic technician, AK-973
Hugh Wolfe, photolithographer, AK-924



Your employee newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

Staying in touch with BLM retirees

George Harper is continuing his research on Blacks in Alaska history under a grant from the Alaska Humanities Forum. Administered by the Alaska Historical Society, the grant funds Harper's research as he interviews individuals and examines records at museums, libraries and city archives in eleven Alaskan communities.

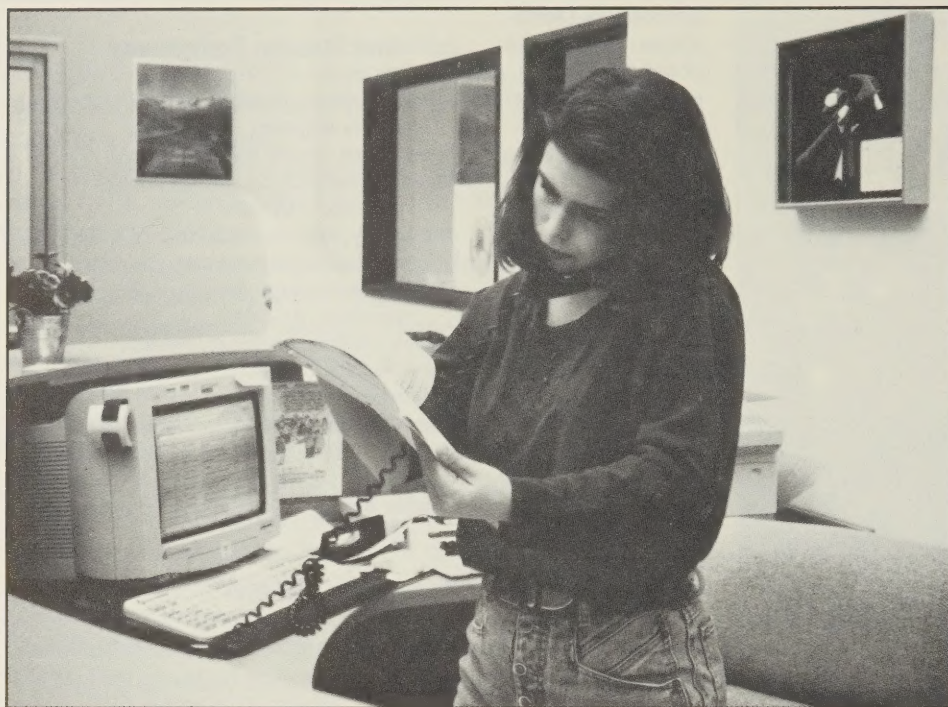
"I'm retired now, and research is hard to do on a limited income," said Harper. The data he's collecting will be used for exhibits, an educational video, a photographic history book, and will be included in UAA archives, "so other people doing research will have access to this information. I'm working harder now than when I was working!"

Retired Glennallen District Manager **Gene Keith** departed Alaska in April to make his home in Hines, Oregon. He says he's been having a good time as a retiree, and recommends it to everyone. However, Keith cautions that his "new boss (Gail Keith) is much tougher than any state director I ever worked for!" And speaking of state directors, he added that he had a pleasant visit recently with his former SD when Ed and Marlene Spang stopped by on their way to their new home in Ontario, Ore.

Former Procurement supervisor **Bev Madding** reports that her transplant to sunny Arizona was a success. She was one of some two dozen Alaska BLMers who retired or took early-outs during the first round of buy-outs in the spring of '94. Madding is currently working for a security service in Tucson, and reports that she doesn't miss the "stress of being a supervisor!"

BLM Alaska retirees: Would you like to share news with current or retired BLM Alaska employees about how you're spending your retirement? If so, drop a line to Editor, Alaska People, BLM External Affairs, 222 W. 7th Avenue, #13, Anchorage, AK 99513-7599. We'd love to hear from ya!

Phones, faxes, and friendly faces



Teresa McPherson

Kathryn Clark, a senior at Chugiak High, successfully juggles phones, faxes, computers and visitors at the busy reception area of the Joint Pipeline Office. Clark is one of ten Anchorage area students gaining work experience at BLM this summer under a new cooperative agreement with the Anchorage School District.

ALASKA PEOPLE is published bimonthly for current and retired BLM Alaska employees. It's produced by the External Affairs Staff, Alaska State Office, 222 W. 7th Avenue, #13, Anchorage, AK 99513-7599. Phone (907) 271-5555. Employee contributions are gladly accepted!

Chief - Dave Vickery
Editor - Teresa McPherson
Graphics - Jim Mroczek



Bureau of Land Management
222 West 7th Avenue, #13
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599

Return if not delivered in 10 days
OFFICIAL BUSINESS/Penalty for Private Use \$300

BLM/AK/AD-95/002+1120+912

BLM Library
Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 50, OC-521
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, CO 80225